

You could see the blood. It was darker than you thought. It was all on the ground outside Chicken Joe's. It just felt crazy.

Jordan: 'I'll give you a million quid if you touch it.'

Me: 'You don't have a million.'

Jordan: 'One quid then.'

You wanted to touch it but you couldn't get close enough. There was a line in the way:

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

If you cross the line you'll turn to dust.

We weren't allowed to talk to the policeman, he had to concentrate for if the killer came back. I could see the chains hanging from his belt but I couldn't see the gun.

The dead boy's mamma was guarding the blood. She wanted it to stay, you could tell. The rain wanted to come and wash the blood away but she wouldn't let it. She wasn't even crying, she was just stiff and fierce like it was her job to scare the rain back up into the sky. A pigeon was looking for his chop. He walked right in the blood. He was even sad as well, you could tell where his eyes were all pink and dead.

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The flowers were already bent. There were pictures of the dead boy wearing his school uniform. His jumper was green.

My jumper's blue. My uniform's better. The only bad thing about it is the tie, it's too scratchy. I hate it when they're scratchy like that.

There were bottles of beer instead of candles and the dead boy's friends wrote messages to him. They all said he was a great friend. Some of the spelling was wrong but I didn't mind. His football boots were on the railings tied up by their laces. They were nearly new Nikes, the studs were proper metal and everything.

Jordan: 'Shall I tie them? He don't need 'em no more.'

I just pretended I didn't hear him. Jordan would never really steal them, they were a million times too big. They looked too empty just hanging there. I wanted to wear them but they'd never fit.

Me and the dead boy were only half friends, I didn't see him very much because he was older and he didn't go to my school. He could ride his bike with no hands and you never even wanted him to fall off. I said a prayer for him inside my head. It just said sorry. That's all I could remember. I pretended like if I kept looking hard enough I could make the blood move and go back in the shape of a boy. I could bring him back alive that way. It happened before, where I used to live there was a chief who brought his son back like that. It was a long time ago, before I was born. Asweh, it was a miracle. It didn't work this time.

I gave him my bouncy ball. I don't need it anymore, I've got five more under my bed. Jordan only gave him a pebble he found on the floor.

Me: 'That doesn't count. It has to be something that belonged to you.'

Jordan: 'I ain't got nothing. I didn't know we had to bring a present.'

I gave Jordan a strawberry Chewit to give to the dead boy, then I showed him how to make a cross. Both the two of us made a cross. We were very quiet. It even felt important. We ran all the way home. I beat Jordan easily. I can beat everybody, I'm the fastest in Year 7. I just wanted to get away before the dying caught us.

The buildings are all mighty around here. My tower is as high as the lighthouse at Jamestown. There are three towers all in a row: Luxembourg House, Stockholm House and Copenhagen House. I live in Copenhagen House. My flat is on floor 9 out of 14. It's not even hutious, I can look from the window now and my belly doesn't even turn over. I love going in the lift, it's brutal, especially when you're the only one in there. Then you could be a spirit or a spy. You even forget the pissy smell because you're going so fast.

It's proper windy at the bottom like a whirlpool. If you stand at the bottom where the tower meets the ground and put your arms out, you can pretend like you're a bird. You can feel the wind try to pick you up, it's nearly like flying.

Me: 'Hold your arms out wider!'

Jordan: 'They're as wide as I can get 'em! This is so gay, I'm not doing it no more!'

Me: 'It's not gay, it's brilliant!'

Asweh, it's the best way to feel alive. You only don't want the wind to pick you up, because you don't know where it will drop you. It might drop you in the bushes or the sea.

In England there's a hell of different words for everything. It's for if you forget one, there's always another one left over. It's very helpful. Gay and dumb and lame mean all

the same. Piss and slash and tinkle mean all the same (the same as greet the chief). There's a million words for a bulla. When I came to my new school, do you know what's the first thing Connor Green said to me?

Connor Green: 'Have you got happiness?'

Me: 'Yes.'

Connor Green: 'Are you sure you've got happiness?'

Me: 'Yes.'

Connor Green: 'But are you really sure?'

Me: 'I think so.'

He kept asking me if I had happiness. He wouldn't stop. In the end it just vexed me. Then I wasn't sure. Connor Green was laughing, I didn't even know why. Then Manik told me it was a trick.

Manik: 'He's not asking if you've got happiness, he's asking if you've got a penis. He says it to everyone. It's just a trick.'

It only sounds like happiness but really it means a penis. Ha-penis.

Connor Green: 'Got ya! Hook, line and sinker!'

Connor Green is always making tricks. He's just a confusionist. That's the first thing you learn about him. At least I didn't lose. I do have a penis. The trick doesn't work if it's true.

Some people use their balconies for hanging washing or growing plants. I only use mine for watching the helicopters. It's a bit dizzy. You can't stay out there for more than one minute or you'll turn into an icicle. I saw X-Fire painting his name on the wall of Stockholm House. He didn't know I could see him. He was proper quick and the words still came out dope-fine. I want to write my own name that big but the paint in a can is too dangerous, if you get it on yourself it never washes off, even forever.

The baby trees are in a cage. They put a cage around the tree to stop you stealing it. Asweh, it's very crazy. Who'd steal a tree anyway? Who'd chook a boy just to get his Chicken Joe's?

When Mamma puts her phone on speaker it sounds like they're far away. It makes Papa's voice go proper echoey like he's trapped in a submarine at the bottom of the sea. I pretend like he has one hour of air left, if he doesn't get rescued by then it's all over. It always freaks me out. I'm the man of the house until Papa escapes. He even said it. It's my duty to look after everything. I told him about my pigeon.

Me: 'A pigeon flew in the window. Lydia was even scared.'

Lydia: 'How! No I was not!'

Me: 'She was. She said his wings were making her crazy. I had to catch him.'

I put some flour in my hand and the pigeon landed on it. He was only hungry. I tricked him with the flour. You have to walk proper slow, if you go too fast the pigeon will just get scared and fly off again.

Lydia: 'Hurry up! It's going to bite somebody!'

Me: 'Advise yourself! He only wants to get out. Shut up or you'll scare him.'

His feet felt scratchy on my hand like a chicken's. It was lovely. I made him my special pigeon. I made a proper good look at him to remember his colours, then I let him out on the balcony and he just flew away. You don't even need to kill them.

Papa: 'Good work.'

Papa's voice was smiling. I love it when his voice is smiling, it means you did good. I didn't need to wash my hands after, my pigeon doesn't have any germs. They're always telling you to wash your hands. Asweh, there's so many germs here you wouldn't believe it! Everybody's scared of them all the time. Germs from Africa are the most deadliest, that's why Vilis ran away when I tried to say hello to him, he thinks if he breathes my germs he'll die.

I didn't even know I brought the germs with me. You can't feel them or see them or anything. Adjei, germs are very tricky! I don't even care if Vilis hates me, he's a dirty tackler and he never passes the ball to me.

Agnes loves to blow spit bubbles. She's only still allowed because she's a baby. I even want her to blow lots of them. As many as she wants and forever.

Me: 'Hello, Agnes!'

Agnes: 'O!'

I swear by God, when Agnes says hello it makes your ears ring like a crazy bell! You love it anyway. When Agnes says hello Mamma cries and laughs at the same time, she's the only person I know who can do it. Agnes couldn't come with us because Mamma has to work all the time. Grandma Ama looks after her instead. It's only until Papa sells all the things from his shop, then he's going to buy some more tickets and we'll all be together again. It's only been two months since we left, you only start to forget them after one year. It won't even be that long.

Me: 'Can you say Harri?'

Papa: 'Not yet. Give her time.'

Me: 'What's she doing?'

Papa: 'Just blowing more bubbles. You better go now.'

Me: 'OK. Come soon. Bring some Ahomka, I can't find any here. I love you.'

Papa: 'I lo

That's when the calling card ran out. I always hate it when that happens. It's always a shock even if it happens every time. It's like at night when I'm watching the helicopters and they go quiet, I always think they're going to crash on me. Asweh, when the engine comes on again it's a mighty relief!

I saw a real dead person. It was where I used to live, at the market in Kaneshie. An orange lady got hit by a trotro, nobody even saw it coming. I pretended like all the oranges rolling everywhere were her happy memories and they were looking for a new person to stick to so they didn't get wasted. The shoeshine boys tried to steal some of the oranges that didn't get run over but Papa and another man made them put them back in her basket. The shoeshine boys should know you never steal from the dead. It's the duty of the righteous to show the godless the right way. You have to help them whenever you can, even if they don't want it. They only think they don't want it but really they do. You only get to be righteous if you can sing every church song without looking at the words. Only Pastor Taylor and Mr Frimpong can do it and both the two of them are proper old. Mr Frimpong's so old there's spiders in his ears, I've seen them with my own two eyes.

At church we said a special prayer for the dead boy. We asked that his soul would be carried into the arms of the Lord and the Lord would soften the heart of his killers so they'd give themselves up. Pastor Taylor made a special message to all the children. He said if we knew anybody with a knife to tell about them.

Lydia was peeling the cassava for fufu.

Me: 'You've got a knife! I'm telling about you!'

Lydia: 'Gowayou. What shall I peel them with, a spoon?'

Me: 'You can peel them with your breath. It's like a dragon.'

Lydia: 'Your breath's like a dog. Have you been licking bumholes again?'

It's our favourite game to see who can make the best abuse. I'm usually the winner. So far I have a thousand points and Lydia only has two hundred. We only play when Mamma can't hear. I chooked myself with the fork. It was only in my arm. I wanted to see how much it hurt and how long the holes would last. I was going to tell everybody they were my magic marks from when I was born and they mean I can see inside your mind. But they disappeared after one minute. It still hurt like crazy.

Me: 'I wonder what it feels like to be chooked for real. I wonder if you see stars.'

Lydia: 'Do you want to find out?'

Me: 'Or fire. I bet you see fire.'

My Mustang has fire. I've got four cars: a Mustang and a Beetle and a Lexus and a Suzuki jeep. My best is the Mustang, it's just dope-fine. It's blue with fire on the bonnet and the fire is in the shape of wings. It has no scratches because I never crash it, I only look at it. I can still see the fire when I close my eyes. That's what dying must be like, except the fire isn't beautiful anymore because it actually burns.

Manik's papa showed me how to tie my tie. It was my first day at my new school. I hid my tie in my bag, I was going to tell them it got stolen. But when I got to school I got scared. Everybody was wearing a tie. Manik's papa was there with Manik. The whole thing was his idea.

Manik's papa walks to school with him every day. He has to guard Manik from the robbers. Manik had his trainers stolen one time. One of the Dell Farm Crew stole them. When they didn't fit they put them up a tree. Manik couldn't get them down again because he's too fat to climb the tree.

Manik's papa: 'Let them try it again. It'll be a different story next time, little bastards.'

Manik's papa's quite hutious. He's always red-eyes. He knows swordfighting. Asweh, I'm glad I'm not Manik's enemy! Manik's papa put my tie on for me and made the knot. He showed me how to take the tie off without untying it. You just make a hole big enough to get your head through then you take the tie off over your head. That way you don't have to tie the tie every day. It even works. Now I'll never have to tie my tie my whole life. I beat the tie at his own game!

There's no songs in my new school. The best bit about my old school was when Kofi Allotey made up his own words:

Kofi Allotey: *'Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers.
Please don't burn me on the stove
Or push me down the stairs.'*

Asweh, he caught so many blows we called it the Kofi Stick!

At first me and Lydia stayed together at breaktime. Now we stay with our friends. If we see each other we have to pretend we don't know each other. The first one to say hello is the loser. At breaktime I just play suicide bomber or zombies. Suicide bomber is when you run at the other person and crash them as hard as you can. If the other person falls over you get a hundred points. If they just move but don't fall over it's ten points. One person is always the lookout because suicide bomber is banned. If the teacher catches you playing you'll get a detention.

Zombies is just acting like a zombie. You get extra points for accuracy.

When you're not playing games you can swap things instead. The most wanted things to swap are football stickers and sweets but you can swap anything if somebody wants it. Chevon Brown and Saleem Khan swapped watches. Saleem Khan's watch tells the time on the moon, but Chevon Brown's is chunkier and it's made of real titanium. They're both bo-styles. Everybody was happy with the deal but then Saleem Khan wanted to swap back.

Saleem Khan: 'I changed my mind, that's all.'

Chevon Brown: 'But we shook on it, man.'

Saleem Khan: 'I had my fingers crossed, innit.'

Chevon Brown: 'Pussy clart. Two punches.'

Saleem Khan: 'No, man. One.'

Chevon Brown: 'On the head though.'

Saleem Khan: 'The shoulder, the shoulder.'

Chevon Brown: 'Rarse.'

Chevon Brown punched Saleem Khan proper hard and gave him a dead arm. It was his fault for going back on the deal. He was only scared for if his mamma got red-eyes.

I don't have a watch yet, I don't even need one. The bell tells you where to be and there's a clock in the classroom. When you're outside school you don't need to know the hour, your belly tells you when it's chop time. You just go home when you're hungry enough, that way you never forget.

I was the dead boy. X-Fire was teaching us about chooking. He didn't use a real knife, just his fingers. They still felt quite sharp. X-Fire says when you chook somebody you have to do it proper quick because you feel it as well.

X-Fire: 'When the knife goes in them you can feel where it hits. If it hits a bone or something it feels disgusting, man. You're best going for somewhere soft like the belly so it goes in nice and easy, then you don't feel nothing. The first time I shanked someone was the worst, man. All his guts fell out. It was well sick. I didn't know where to aim yet, I got him too low down, innit. That's why I go for the side now, near the love handles. Then you don't get no nasty stuff falling out.'

Dizzy: 'The first time I shanked someone the blade got stuck. I hit a rib or something. I had to pull like f— to get it out. I was like, give me my blade back, bitch!'

Clipz: 'Innit. You just wanna stick him and get the f— outta there. No messing around.'

Killa didn't join in. He was just quiet. Maybe he hasn't chooked anybody yet. Or maybe he's chooked so many people that he's bored by now. That must be why he's called Killa.

I was the dead boy because X-Fire picked me. I just had to stand still. X-Fire didn't like it when I moved. He kept

pulling me. I felt quite sick but I had to keep listening. I even wanted to listen. It was like when I first tasted mushy peas: it was disgusting but I had to finish it because wasting food is a sin.

I could still feel his fingers in my ribs even after he was gone. It felt very crazy. X-Fire's breath smells like cigarettes and chocolate milk. I wasn't even scared.

We always go to the market on Saturday. It's all outside so you get proper cold waiting for Mamma to pay, you have to keep your mouth closed to stop your teeth escaping. It's only even worth it for all the dope-fine things you can look at like a remote-control car or a samurai sword (it's only made from wood but it's still proper hutious. If I had the means I'd buy it like that, I'd use it to chase the invaders away).

My favourite shop is the sweets shop. It sells every kind of Haribo you can think of. It's my ambition to try every style there is. So far I've tried about half. Haribo comes in a million different shapes. Whatever there is in the world, there's a chewy Haribo version of it. Asweh, it's true. They make cola bottles, worms, milkshakes, teddy bears, crocodiles, fried eggs, dummies, fangs, cherries, frogs, and millions more. Cola bottles are the best.

I only don't like the jelly babies. They're cruel. Mamma has seen a dead baby for real. She sees them every day at work. I never buy the jelly babies for if it would remind her.

Mamma was looking all over for a pigeon net. I said a prayer to myself that she never found one.

Me: 'It's not fair. Just because Lydia's scared of them.'

Lydia: 'Gowayou! I'm not scared!'

Mamma: 'We can't have pigeons flying in the house all the time, it's dirty, they'll mess everywhere.'

Me: 'It was only one time. He was hungry, that's all.'

Mamma: 'Don't make squeeze-eyes at me, Harrison, I'm not arguing with you.'

Some people put nets over their balcony to stop the pigeons getting in. I don't even agree with it, they're not hurting anybody. I want my pigeon to come back. I even hid some fufu flour in my pant drawer specially for him. I don't want to eat him, I want to make him tame so he'll go on my shoulder. In the end my prayer was answered: they don't even sell pigeon nets at the market. Asweh, it was a mighty relief!

Me: 'Don't worry. If he comes back I'll tell him to find another home.'

Mamma: 'Don't put any more food out for it. Don't think I haven't seen the flour all over the balcony, I'm not stupid.'

Me: 'I won't!'

I hate it when Mamma reads my mind! From today onward going I'll just wait till she's asleep.

I pretended like I didn't see when Jordan stole the lady's phone. I didn't want Mamma to think I agreed with it, she already hates Jordan because he spits on the stairs. I was at Noddy's clothes stall. I saw the whole thing while Mamma was paying for my Chelsea shirt. It was X-Fire and Dizzy who actually got the lady's phone. They were very tricky: they waited until she was talking, then they bumped her to make her drop the phone. They made it look like an accident. The phone fell on the ground, then Jordan came from nowhere, picked the phone up and ran off with it. He squeezed into the crowd and was gone in one second. It was like he was a ghost, he just disappeared. The lady looked around for her phone but it was already gone, there was nothing she could do. It was a clean getaway. Jordan doesn't get paid for helping them, he just gets some cigarettes or one week of freedom where they don't try to kill him. It's not even a good deal. If it was me I'd want a tenner every time.

My new Chelsea shirt is a bit too scratchy. I had to put a plaster on my nipples to stop them getting rubbed off. It's still bo-styles though. The dead boy loved Chelsea as well. He had the proper shirt with Samsung on it, even the away kit. I hope Heaven has proper goals with nets on them, then you don't have to run miles to get the ball every time you score a goal.